

## Message Text

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13

ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20

USIA-15 DRC-01 NIC-01 SAJ-01 /106 W

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P R 170845Z DEC 73

FM AMEMBASSY HELSINKI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6998

INFO AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, ELAB, FI

SUBJ: FINNISH GOVERNMENT HANDILY SURVIVES VOTE  
OF CONFIDENCE.

1. BEGIN SUMMARY. AFTER DAY AND A HALF DEBATE IN  
PARLIAMENT, THE FINNISH GOVERNMENT SURVIVED BY A  
COMFORTABLE MAJORITY OF 102 TO 61 MOTION WHICH IT  
TERMED ONE OF NON-CONFIDENCE. END SUMMARY.

2. THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY INITIALLY PRESENTED A  
FORMAL INTERPELLATION TO THE GOVERNMENT ON NOVEMBER 27  
QUESTIONING ITS FISCAL AND TAX POLICIES. THE GOVERN-  
MENT'S OFFICIAL REPLY WAS GIVEN BY FINANCE MINISTER,  
JOHANNES VIROLAINEN, ON DECEMBER 5 AND DEBATE WAS  
DEFERRED UNTIL DECEMBER 11-12. BEFORE THE DEBATE  
BEGAN THE GOVERNMENT DECLARED THAT IT CONSIDERED  
THE CONSERVATIVE MOTION A QUESTION OF CONFIDENCE.  
DURING THE COURSE OF THE DEBATE SEVERAL OTHER  
OPPOSITION PARTIES INTRODUCED THEIR OWN MOTIONS OF NON-  
CONFIDENCE. THE ONE INTRODUCED BY THE COMMUNIST-  
FRONT FINNISH PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC LEAGUE (SKDL)

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SURVIVED TESTING AGAINST THE OTHER MOTIONS TO BECOME

THE ONE ON WHICH THE GOVERNMENT WOULD STAND OR FALL.

3. THE GOVERNMENT MAINTAINED A SOLID FRONT THROUGHOUT THE DEBATE, SUPPORTING THE COMMUNIST RESOLUTION AGAINST ALL CHALLENGERS UNTIL THE FINAL VOTE IN WHICH SOME MEMBERS OF THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY AS WELL AS REPRESENTATIVES OF THE RURAL AND UNITY PARTIES VOTED WITH THE COMMUNISTS. OTHER OPPOSITION MEMBERS ABSTAINED OR ABSENTED THEMSELVES.

4. THE GOVERNMENT SURVIVED THE DEBATE IN A STRENGTHENED POSITION. IT EFFECTIVELY ARGUED THAT THE MOTIONS OF NON-CONFIDENCE ONLY RETARDED SOLUTION OF THE SITUATION THEY DEPLORED.

5. THE GENESIS OF THE CONSERVATIVE'S INTERPELLATION WAS LARGELY POLITICAL. THE PARTY NEEDED TO REGROUP ITS FORCES AFTER THE SERIOUS SPLIT IT SUFFERED DURING THE COURSE OF THE DEBATE ON THE ECONOMIC PROTECTION LAWS RELATED TO THE FREE TRADE AGREEMENT WITH THE EC. WHETHER THIS TACTIC SUCCEEDED, IN VIEW OF THE SPLIT VOTING PATTERN ON THE COMMUNIST MOTION OF NON-CONFIDENCE, IS OPEN TO QUESTION.

6. IT IS PRACTICALLY CERTAIN, HOWEVER, THAT THERE WILL BE NO SERIOUS DEFECTIONS FROM THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY TO THE NEWLY-FORMED CONSTITUTIONALIST PARTY. ONLY ONE MEMBER OF THE CONSERVATIVE PARLIAMENTARY GROUP IS CURRENTLY CONSIDERED A LIKELY DEFECTOR -- MRS. SALME KATAJAVUORI. ONE FURTHER RESULT OF THE DEBATE ON THE QUESTION OF CONFIDENCE WAS TO INCREASE THE PARLIAMENTARY POLITICAL PARTIES TO TEN. FORMER SWEDISH PARTY MEMBER, GEORG EHRNROOTH, ANNOUNCED JUST BEFORE THE QUESTION-OF-CONFIDENCE DEBATE THAT HE HAD JOINED THE CONSTITUTIONALIST PARTY. EHRNROOTH'S MOVE HAD BEEN PREDICTED SINCE HE HAD LEFT THE SWEDISH PARTY A FEW DAYS BEFORE, BUT THE TIMING OF HIS ACTION ENTITLED HIM TO AN EARLY SPEAKING TURN AS A PARLIAMENTARY GROUP LEADER. KREHBIEL

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## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 01 JAN 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** LABOR RELATIONS, POLITICAL SITUATION, POLITICAL PARTIES, TAXES  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 17 DEC 1973  
**Decaption Date:** 01 JAN 1960  
**Decaption Note:**  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Authority:** morefirh  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
**Disposition Remarks:**  
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**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** N/A  
**Errors:** N/A  
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**Line Count:** 99  
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**Original Classification:** LIMITED OFFICIAL USE  
**Original Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Original Previous Classification:** n/a  
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**Page Count:** 2  
**Previous Channel Indicators:**  
**Previous Classification:** LIMITED OFFICIAL USE  
**Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Reference:** n/a  
**Review Action:** RELEASED, APPROVED  
**Review Authority:** morefirh  
**Review Comment:** n/a  
**Review Content Flags:**  
**Review Date:** 13 SEP 2001  
**Review Event:**  
**Review Exemptions:** n/a  
**Review History:** RELEASED <13-Sep-2001 by freemaal>; APPROVED <01-Nov-2001 by morefirh>  
**Review Markings:**

Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
30 JUN 2005

**Review Media Identifier:**  
**Review Referrals:** n/a  
**Review Release Date:** n/a  
**Review Release Event:** n/a  
**Review Transfer Date:**  
**Review Withdrawn Fields:** n/a  
**Secure:** OPEN  
**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** FINNISH GOVERNMENT HANDILY SURVIVES VOTE OF CONFIDENCE.  
**TAGS:** PINT, ELAB, FI  
**To:** STATE  
**Type:** TE  
**Markings:** Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005